



Board Member Ethics

IC 35-44-1-3 (Conflict of Interest)

Beyond the strict legal definition of how board members should conduct themselves, there are board member ethics. As a board member of a public library, you are a public servant. The public expects that your performance will always be above question and for the public good, not for your own interest or another special interest.

Most professional employees are covered by a code of ethics or standards of practice. The following list is a suggested code of ethical conduct your board could adopt for all board members.

*“As a board
member of a
public library,
you are a
public servant.”*

As a member of the library board I will:

- Listen carefully to the board members who are my teammates.
- Respect the opinion of the other board members.
- Respect and support the majority decisions of the board.
- Recognize that all authority is vested in the board when it meets in legal session and not with individual board members.
- Keep well-informed of developments that are relevant to issues that may come before the board.
- Participate actively in board meetings and actions.
- Call to the attention of the board any issues that I believe will have an adverse effect on the library.
- Attempt to interpret the needs of the community to the library and interpret the action of the library to the community.

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- Refer complaints about the library to the proper level on the chain of command.
 - Recognize that the board member's job is to ensure that the library is well-managed, not to manage the library.
 - Vote to hire the best possible person to manage our library.
 - Represent the whole community to the library and not a particular area or group.
 - Do my best to ensure that the library is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating in the best interests of the community.
 - Always work to learn more about the board member's job and how to do the job better.
 - Declare any conflict of interests between my personal life and my position on the library board and avoid voting on issues that appear to be a conflict of interests.
 - SBOA Uniform Conflict of Interest, Form 236
 - <http://www.in.gov/sboa/2416.htm>
 - See also *Accounting and Uniform Compliance Guidelines Manual for Libraries* Chapter 7: http://www.in.gov/sboa/files/lib2013_007.pdf
 - Abide by the ethics and conflict of interest statements in the board by-laws, as required in 590 IAC 6-1-4(g),
<http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/T05900/A00060.PDF?>

As a member of the library board I will not:

- Be critical, in or outside of the board meeting, of fellow board members or their opinions.
- Use any part of the library for my personal advantage or the personal advantage of my friends or relatives.
- Discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting.
- Promise prior to a meeting how I will vote on any issue in the meeting
- Interfere with the duties of the director or undermine the director's authority.